

rivalled Gardens of Kew—constituting a most valuable and characteristic feature of an institution of which the British botanist has good reason to be proud—made an epoch in the study of vegetable products, and a glance at the pamphlet before us shows the remarkable progress that has been made in a few years. This Museum, founded in 1847, has already outgrown its original tenement, wherein it gradually invaded room after room until it filled the house. Another building, of dimensions suited to the growing importance of the collection, is about to be erected in the Gardens. On looking over the multifold objects at present displayed, it is not difficult to distinguish a number of substances whose nature and origin have been revealed through the inquiries set on foot in this Museum,—forming as it does a centre for the reception of information of this kind. New facts, frequently furnished from all parts of the world, are now at once received and enrolled in the chronicles of science, instead of being scattered, often to be lost, in books of travels and private letters; and new or rare products are no longer buried in private collections of “curiosities,” occupants of the drawing-room in one generation, of the lumber-room and the rubbish-heap in the next.

The objects were at first arranged in the Kew Museum according to their structure or uses. This was found inconvenient in many respects; especially that of requiring repetitions, when, as is not uncommonly the case, the same plant yields substances of very varied uses. The objects are now arranged in cases devoted to the natural orders of plants; a plan not only more consistent with scientific notions, but really conveying much more knowledge to the ordinary observer. The pamphlet which has served as the text of these remarks is a *catalogue raisonné* of the objects now exhibited. It contains a vast amount of information compressed into a small compass, much of which is new, and founded upon letters received with the objects from correspondents in all parts of the world;—much collected from works with which botanists only are acquainted, and many of which are not easily accessible. As an authoritative index to the useful substances furnished by the various orders of vegetables, this little book is not merely an indispensable guide to the Museum for which it was compiled, but it will be found a most valuable *aide-mémoire* by all those who are occupied with this department of knowledge. Further, as it indicates the boundaries of our present acquaintance with exotic vegetable products, it is most desirable that it should be in the hands of all travellers, and all residents abroad whose tastes and opportunities allow of their devoting attention to natural objects.

*A Handbook to the Marine Aquarium.* By P. H. GOSSE.  
London: Van Voorst. 1855. 12mo.

The great importance of the Aquarium as a means of extending our knowledge of marine zoology is now so generally admitted, that there is little need for us to dwell upon it. Since the principle of

maintaining the balance of animal and vegetable life in a confined space was first put forward, the Zoological Society has established a fine collection of marine animals, which has enabled even the general public to appreciate the beauty of these inhabitants of the deep. Mr. Gosse very naturally concludes, that this exhibition will induce many to attempt the formation of Aquaria in their own houses; and his object in publishing this little book is to furnish such persons with the necessary directions for the construction and management of their collections. It is, as he tells us in his preface, founded to a great extent upon the concluding chapter of his larger work upon the Aquarium, a work which, from its entering largely upon the natural history of the animals which may be kept in these artificial rock-pools, and from the expensive nature of its illustrations, is far too costly to be generally available as a guide for beginners.

This little handbook appears to contain every information that can be required for a commencement,—such as the different modes of constructing and fitting up the tanks, the mode of collecting animals and plants to stock them, and of keeping the inhabitants in health in their confined abode. We also find Mr. Gosse's receipt for making artificial sea-water, which, notwithstanding Mr. Warington's objections to it, appears to answer well, and will no doubt enable many to preserve marine animals in inland situations where they would be unable to procure natural sea-water. The whole of the directions are given in a plain and intelligible style, and the book will doubtless prove highly acceptable to those who interest themselves in marine zoology.

*Popular Geography of Plants, or a Botanical Excursion round the World.* By E. M. C. Edited by C. DAUBENY, M.D. &c. London: Reeve. 1855.

A little work of no great pretensions, and, as such, deserving of a good word. It consists chiefly of gatherings from the narratives of botanical travellers, loosely dovetailed together and supported on the framework of Meyen's Geographical Regions. We think the author has *diluted* a little too much, in the desire to be popular; the mere fact of being sufficiently acquainted with plants to derive any distinct idea from the many names cited, would almost imply an amount of previous knowledge sufficient to form a basis for a little more in the way of general principles. However, tolerable success has been attained in keeping up the spirit of the narrative style adopted,—a matter of some difficulty considering the concision required, and the frequent sudden transitions and changes of scene. We can recommend the work for the reading of persons young or old who have a taste for plants, especially to amateur botanists who have not begun to study in this direction. It is also especially calculated to heighten the interest which ordinary persons may derive from visits to Kew or other botanical gardens.

The illustrations are very bad—so much so, as to act as a terrible 'damper' on the fire of the text.